

NSC BRIEFING

21 January 1959

SOVIET PARTY CONGRESS

- I. The Soviet Union's 21st Party Congress will convene on Tuesday-- the first since the famous 20th Congress in Feb 1956.
 - A. The party congress is the biggest and most publicized show Moscow puts on.
 - B. Normally a party congress is convened every four years, has some 1,300 delegates, and attracts big brass from other Communist parties throughout world.
 1. In theory, full 8,000,000 membership of Soviet party elects delegates to the Party Congress, which in turn elects party Central Committee, which elects party Presidium; in practice, however, selection is from above rather than election from below.
 - C. A regular party congress would hear Khrushchev give a full status report on Communist activities all over the world; "elect" a new Central Committee; be followed by secret meetings with visiting delegations.
- II. Next week's Congress, however, has been labeled "Special" (the first of its kind in Soviet history).
 - A. The only item on the agenda is Khrushchev's report on new Seven-Year Plan (1959-1963).
 - B. The Congress will probably not limit itself to this and surprises are not unlikely (remember Khrushchev's "secret" anti-Stalin speech in 1956...still never published in USSR).
 - C. Secret meetings with foreign delegations following the Congress are known to be scheduled.

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